



A program of works by
AUGUSTA READ THOMAS
DONALD CROCKETT
and
ARTHUR GOTTSCHALK

Friday, October 9, 2009
8:00 p.m.
Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Cantos for Slava (version 2;
alternate movement order) (2009)

Augusta Read Thomas
(b. 1964)

*Spacious, Elegant and Warm;
Playful and energized;
Elegant and Lyrical*

The Fischer Duo
Norman Fischer, cello
Jeanne Kierman, piano

The Ceiling of Heaven (2003)

Donald Crockett
(b. 1951)

I. Prelude: Distant Fanfares
II. Zenith
III. Elegy
IV. Interlude: Processional
V. The Ceiling of Heaven

Kaoru Suzuki, violin
Ivo-Jan van der Werff, viola
Norman Fischer, cello
Jeanne Kierman, piano

***Brunetti Variations: Concerto for Violin
and Bassoon with Chamber Orchestra ****

Arthur Gottschalk
(b. 1952)

Theme: Andante

Variation 1: Deconstruction (Adagio; Allegro)

Variation 2: Hall of Mirrors

Variation 3: Meditation (Molto Espressivo)

Variation 4: Finale (Allegro)

*Kenneth Goldsmith, violin
Benjamin Kamins, bassoon
Cristian Măcelaru, conductor*

Chamber Orchestra

Violin I

David Huntsman

Chloe Trevor

Yennifer Correia

Jude Ziliak

Viola

Amy Mason

Jordan Warmath

Rainey Weber

Cello

Lachezar Kostov

Keith Thomas

Double Bass

Amalia Bandy

Oboe

Malia Smith

Clarinet

André Dyachenko

Violin II

Creston Herron

Tracy Wu

Brooke Bennett

Jackie Murchie

Horn

Tyler Holt

Harpsichord

Kimi Kawashima

Flute

Catherine Ramirez

** This work was funded in part by a grant from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.*

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

***Cantos for Slava* (version 2)** Augusta Read Thomas

Slava fostered and fought for that outward-looking spirit that embraces openness, understanding and, above all, liberty. He believed that it was freedom of expression and a passionate devotion to the arts and to the universality of the idea of political liberty that allows the arts to flourish. Slava would not have wanted me to write solely a slow dirge or funeral song in his memory, as he was too full of life, creativity, new ideas, new sounds, energy, and passion.

*Canto means any of the main divisions of a long poem. In **Cantos for Slava**, four cantos are played without pause. They are of contrasting moods, although all based on related materials.*

An underlying concern of this composition is that of plucked sounds. For instance, three techniques are to be played with a great variety of color: the cello playing pizzicato, short pizzicato-like notes or chords played on the keyboard, and plucking of strings inside the piano.

In Canto No. 1, marked "Spacious, Elegant and Warm," there is one plucked piano string for each of Slava's eighty years of life; and no single note is plucked more than once (i.e. eight notes are not ever plucked assuming an 88-key piano). Above this round resonance of collected tones, the cello sings a long, soulful line, at times almost as if chanting – as if the cello was telling a story. Canto No. 2 and No. 3 are characterized by playful and energized syncopated lines, the cello plays only pizzicato in No. 2 (rarely using the bow), and Canto No. 3 serves as a transition to Canto No. 4, which is marked "Elegant and Lyrical." It is a dreamy melodic trajectory, and toward the very end, the score is marked "... as if floating away into the sunshine ..."

***Cantos for Slava** is dedicated with admiration and gratitude to Frances Richard, Matt Haimovitz, and Geoffrey Burleson.*

The premiere of version 2 was given by The Fischer Duo: Norman Fischer, cello, and Jeanne Kierman, piano in Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood Music Center on August 1, 2009.

– Note by the composer

Augusta Read Thomas, a Mead Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1997-2006, was a professor of composition at the Eastman School of Music from 1993-2001, and from 2001-2006 was the Wyatt Professor of Music at Northwestern University.

The Ceiling of Heaven Donald Crockett

The title for **The Ceiling of Heaven** comes from a Kenneth Rexroth poem called **Signature of All Things**:

... The hawks scream,
Playing together on the ceiling
Of heaven. The long hours go by.
I think of those who have loved me,
Of all the mountains I have climbed,
Of all the seas I have swum in.

This evokes the natural world – always an inspiration for me – and the notion of a piece “in memory of.” The subtitles of the five movements hint at their content: **I. Prelude: Distant Fanfares** presents declamatory statements featuring the viola and echoed in the other instruments; **II. Zenith** suggests the sun high in a desert sky – another ceiling of heaven – with a more expressive solo in the viola as its middle section; **III. Elegy** is an extended, lyric memorial framing a central agitated fast section; **IV. Interlude: Processional** is a brief valedictory dirge; and **V. The Ceiling of Heaven** is a rambunctious evocation of those hawks – and all freewheeling beings – “playing together on the ceiling of heaven.”

The Ceiling of Heaven was jointly commissioned by the Jacob Glick Memorial Endowment Fund of the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Xtet. Violist Jacob Glick was a beloved faculty member and Music Director of the Chamber Music Conference for many years, and he was an avid champion of new music throughout his career.

— Note by the composer

Donald Crockett is Chair of the Composition Department and Director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at the USC Thornton School of Music, and Senior Composer-in-Residence with the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East.

* **Brunetti Variations: Concerto for Violin Arthur Gottschalk
and Bassoon with Chamber Orchestra**

Brunetti Variations combines a number of forms and procedures. It is foremost a double concerto, pitting the Baroque chamber orchestra against the solo violin and bassoon. But it also uses concerto grosso textures, wherein the concertante of violin, bassoon, harpsichord, and double bass, first heard in the introductory Theme movement, work against the ripieno of winds and strings in the subsequent variation movements.

The first of these movements is the *Deconstruction*; it is an elaborate pulling apart of the original Brunetti material, scored for the concertante group and strings alone, and featuring a bassoon cadenza. The winds are introduced in the next variation, the *Hall of Mirrors*, in which the bits of material extracted during the first variation are subjected to various contrapuntal alterations, especially inversions. The fourth movement, *Meditation*, matches the Adagio of the theme, concentrating primarily upon a linear presentation of its harmony as a backdrop for cantabile passages that alternate between the soloists. The fourth and last variation is the *Finale*, which features a manic dance rhythm found hidden in the theme, and whose tempo and virtuosic ornamentation increase until the limits of the orchestra and soloists are exhausted.

Brunetti Variations was written at the behest of Kenneth Goldsmith, who found the all-but-forgotten music of Gaetano Brunetti, including the string quartet with bassoon from which this theme was derived, during his research trips to Italy. It was composed for Kenneth Goldsmith and Benjamin Kamins, and was made possible by a generous grant from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.

— Notes by the composer

Arthur Gottschalk is Professor and Chair of the
Music Composition and Theory Department
at The Shepherd School of Music

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

Friday, November 20

PROGRAM

Karim Al-Zand - **Pattern Preludes** (for solo piano)

Richard Lavenda - **String Trio**

George Rochberg - **Caprices** (for solo violin)

Stephen Jaffe - **Offering** (for flute, viola, and harp)

Performers include Kathleen Winkler, violin; SoJin Kim, violin;

James Dunham, viola; Hillary Schoap, viola;

Lachezar Kostov, cello; Catherine Ramirez, flute;

Sadie Turner, harp; and Brian Connelly, piano.

8:00 p.m., Duncan Recital Hall

Free admission



RICE